

CALIFORNIA CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION
Advisory Committee on Diversity
March 29, 2001

Library Tsakopoulos Galleria
828 I Street, Sacramento, California

Attendance

Commissioner Louis Vismara, Committee Co-Chair

Committee Members:

Guadalupe Alonzo	Rafaela Frausto	Edna Marquez	Kate Warren
Brenda Blasingame	Javier Guzman	Irene Martinez	Alan Watahara
Portia S. Choi	Romie Lilly II	Donna Michelson	Martin Waukazoo
Carlene Davis	Rafael Lopez	Patricia Phipps	M. Lynn Yonekura

CCFC Staff:

Jane I. Henderson	Emily Nahat	Barbara Marquez
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Welcome and Introduction

Dr. Louis Vismara began the meeting with welcoming remarks.

Approval of the February 7th, 2001 Minutes.

Motion: It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2001 Committee meeting.

Diversity Tenets

Dr. Vismara discussed the issues to be considered at the upcoming retreat scheduled for April 30 and May 1st, with the main focus to be on fleshing out and finalizing the draft of diversity and disabilities tenets.

Ms. Marquez briefly reviewed the process used in developing the draft diversity tenets, from the initial discussion during the November 2000 meeting to forming a Diversity Tenet Workgroup at the February 2001 meeting. The workgroup is composed of Lou Vismara, Diane Visencio, Patricia Phipps, Irene Martinez and Rafael Lopez. She reported on a Diversity Tenet Workgroup conference call during which direction was provided for the resulting draft copy for today's discussion. Highlights of the direction provided were:

- Tenets need to be small in numbers to facilitate easy understanding
- The tenets needed to address:
 - Policy
 - Program
 - Assessment and Evaluation
 - Leadership (Known and emerging)
 - Education and Training
 - Compliance with state and federal laws
 - Collaboration/Partnerships/Alliances
 - Advocacy
 - Disability services
 - Cultural and linguistic appropriate services

Ms. Marquez introduced Cecilia Sandoval, who was selected as the facilitator for the upcoming two day planning meeting, during which time the Diversity Tenets will be more fully discussed.

Ms. Michelson expressed preference for the Results for Children's Initiative and provided her reasoning. She suggested that the Prop 10 Commission drop the words "racial, minority, African-American, Hispanic, etc." and instead use nationalities or other inclusive phraseology. She spoke about teaching tolerance to pre-K children.

Ms. Blasingame pointed out the importance of the structure of the retreat, which should provide an opportunity to discuss what diversity means to the committee. Language creates reality so the terms that will be chosen are very important. She also commented on the changing demographics in California.

Dr. Vismara noted that there would also be an opportunity to weave all this into the tapestry of school readiness. During the retreat the broad vision, goals and objectives should be identified. The challenge will be to shape a document that incorporates the opportunities and objectives that have been identified.

Mr. Lopez felt that it would be most important to have a tangible document that county commissions can use as a checklist, especially with respect to the languages used in providing services to diverse communities. Dr. Vismara also reminded the committee that the diversity tenets needed to be useful and valued by the State Commission. They needed to be all inclusive document, not only in terms of the words and product, but also in process.

Ann Carr, from Sonoma State University, who working along with Dr. Marcie Hanson at San Francisco State University, reviewed the draft tenets. Together they developed six additional tenets representing young children with disabilities and their families. Ms. Carr offered these to the committee as a way to consider children with disabilities and what might be helpful to them. Here, too, the importance of language and different concepts about children was stressed. The main points were:

- Access for all children to high quality early care and development opportunities
- Including all children
- Belonging and participation
- Specialized services and support
- Family access to information, resources and support
- Culturally responsive family centered approaches
- Partnerships

Rev. Lilly reported on discussions held at the Policy Makers Institute. He emphasized the meaning of the word "partnerships" and how relationships are developed with regard to control of resources by certain entities.

Ms. Carr responded that in working with preschool programs across the state in making sure there is high quality education for all children, it has become apparent there are many barriers around partnerships and what that really means. What the research also points out what really makes a quality program work has nothing to do with the children; it has everything to do with the adults and the relationships that they have to come together. She also explained how she arrived at the language presented.

Rafael Lopez suggested to submit any missing items on the tenets to staff before the retreat in order to do as much work as possible to try and wrap this up.

Ms. Marquez strongly encouraged the input and asked the committee members to reflect on the following questions: "are we going in the right direction; what is missing; what needs to be changed; is this really the right framework; what needs to be deleted or modified; and where can improvements be made in this document. This information will be very useful to staff in order to make the retreat more productive.

A discussion followed on the issue of enforcement and the use of sanctions. It was agreed that there should be an accountability component. Dr. Phipps thought there may be something that can be done legislatively in this regard. Instead of sanctions, terms could be added to state laws and statutes via legislation so that people could start using the proper terms or the terms that the committee feels would be more inclusive.

Mr. Guzman agreed with Dr. Watahara's point of view in that this committee "should NOT be doing business as usual" and should be creative and innovative, especially in looking at accountability and the establishment of standards of practice for the State. Ms. Michelson agreed that talking about what a minimum requirement is, what is

the lowest expectation and what are increasing expectations, as well as many other options, will be extremely useful at the retreat.

Dr. Vismara said he would appreciate comments on his perception that one of the challenges for the retreat will be to define the continuum where disabilities, diversity and cultural competence overlap, and areas that are different. This would help shape the future and the goals. He further suggested taking a random look at county plans to see whether they are reflective of the State Commission's vision and goals in this regard or if they are in need of changes.

Ms. Frausto pointed out that within every ethnic community there is a community strength in the form of various clubs and associations. Instead of looking at government or other large institutions, the strength of these associations should be built upon.

Emily Nahat commented that the community involvement issue in policy decisions and the provision of services would indeed strengthen the committee's work.

Dr. Phipps requested comments with regard to pages 4 and 5 of the draft tenets, where resources will be listed as well as a checklist.

Public Comment

Gene Lucas stated he attended today's meeting in order to understand the function of this committee, which has not been clear from past meeting minutes. He noted that the proposed tenets needed to have more substance and direction.

Pamm Shaw, West Ed Center for Prevention and Early Intervention, commented that the disability policies may be in place, but just having the words in place doesn't necessarily mean the practices follow suit. She encouraged the committee to add policies and practices as it ties in with the information that families receive. Ms. Shaw further indicated that as part of her State Prop 10 project, she is reviewing and pulling out everything with regard to disability, special needs, mental health or anything else having to do with kids with special needs from the county strategic plans to see what local programs that have been funded. The final information will be available sometime in June.

Cheri Schoenborn with the State Department of Developmental Services commented that the tenets specifically approaching diversity were outstanding. In particular, the partnership between disciplines and agencies is especially important, not only at the state level but also at the local level.

Karen Blinstrub from Santa Clara County commented that the tenets needed to address partnerships are not just across disciplines and agencies (at the professional level), but that there are community associations and parent groups that also an essential part of any kind of partnership. Culturally responsive family centered approaches need to be family driven. The families need to say what they need and the purpose of Prop 10 was to have the communities be the driving force.

Advisory Committee on Diversity Planning Meeting

Cecilia Sandoval again introduced herself to the committee members and provided details about her background and experiences as a facilitator. She also provided an outline of the purpose and outcomes of the retreat. She promised to help the attendees meet their goals, guide the discussion and challenge thoughts. Ms. Sandoval discussed having large and small group discussions, thus affording everyone to bring forth their ideas with the goal of having a group consensus on as many levels as possible. She invited comments as to what the members hoped to accomplished. The following points were made:

- consensus about the purpose of the tenets and their use
- need to adopt a set of tenets as a product
- what is the Diversity Committee's role and vision
- shared vision and understanding of vision
- specific set of goals and objectives for the committee with a time line

- develop a plan of action
- understanding how all diverse groups are having access on a community level
- what are core values that drive the interest of this committee
- full inclusion of children 0 - 5 and teaching those children tolerance
- guidance for collaboration, partnering, receiving input and feedback from stakeholders
- shared attendance of Diversity Committee with Executive Directors Association
- a sense of belonging with regard to the issues and needs of the farm worker community
- what is the role of the Diversity Committee in terms of advocacy and political agenda

Ms. Sandoval offered the following possible agenda item discussions for the retreat:

- how the committee is positioned, and affirming its mission
- what are the challenges and opportunities in a political context for this committee
- what is the committee's mandate
- beliefs and values, both individually and collectively vis-à-vis the mandate
- goals and priorities
- who is the client, what is the process, what is the impact
- setting a time line

Dr. Vismara explained that the State Commission looks to the Diversity Committee as a collective expert to provide the vision and to identify items of importance to the Commission. This committee needs to recommend where the power points and leverage points are, especially at the local level. A further discussion followed on the role of the committee.

Public Comments

Gene Lucas commented that one of the goals of the committee should be to evaluate the diversity activities of the Commission itself.

CCFC Media and Public Relations Campaign

Nicole Kasabian stated she would discuss three topics today. First, the recently awarded public relations contract, (2) a kit for new parents, and (3) developing a liaison between the committee and the media and communications work being done for the Commission.

She provided details on the 3-year public relations contract, awarded to Rogers and Associates last week, their long range plans and how Rogers & Associates will impart its work to the committee, as well as how the committee can provide input into the public relations firm.

Ms. Kasabian presented the committee with a pilot evaluation study for the kit for new parents. The three most important questions were:

1. Did parents use the kit?
2. Did they learn anything important or make any positive changes as a result of using the kit?
3. Did it matter in what mode they received the kit?

She provided detailed information resulting from the survey. In addition to the study, input was also received from the Diversity Committee, from the county commissions, and other state agencies and stakeholders. A lengthy general discussion followed on how the kit was received and how the kits are going to be distributed. Mr. Guzman questioned why the New Parent Kit was not pilot-tested in any Central Valley counties. Ms. Davis emphasized the need to hold the county commissions accountable for distribution of the New Parent Kits.

One of the challenges right now is to develop additional languages for the kit besides the English and Spanish version. To help prioritize and focus on how this will be addressed, she suggested that it might be helpful to have a smaller group of the Diversity Committee work together to direct the plan for language adaptation of the kit. She then introduced Bill Imada, President of Imada Communications, one of the public relations and advertising subcontractor.

Mr. Imada addressed the committee. He emphasized the Asian-Pacific Islander issues and explained that this population is among the most diverse in the State. About 70-90% of these communities prefer to speak a language other than English, not only at home but also with their doctors and caregivers. Mr. Imada provided anecdotal information with regard to difficulties encountered in the distribution of the kits. He invited advice from the committee on how to address these problems. He also expressed concern about translating from English all of the kit material due to cultural differences of many of the Asian-Pacific Islander population groups. He proposed considering alternatives to some of the brochures. There should be more practical solutions within a certain time frame to prepare the kits for the different population groups. In conclusion Mr. Imada said that working in multi-cultural marketing is a daunting challenge as it has to go through the same series of steps as an English version would have to. He asked for two or three members to serve on a subcommittee to provide feedback and information on language, color, format, and especially distribution to Asian-Pacific Islander communities. The subcommittee can also help prioritize the key elements of the kit because there will not be enough time to translate every one of the brochures and videos. Committee members Choi, Guzman, and Blasingame volunteered their services, and it was suggested to also include Maysee Yang. Committee member Watahara will offer support and consultation.

Ms. Kasibian suggested having a liaison between the committee and the Media and Public Relations Campaign so that work on advertising, the CBO program, and the development of other components of the campaign can be more beneficial vis -à-vis the time line. It was decided that this item would be discussed further at the retreat.

There were no public comments.

CCFC Initiatives

- School Readiness, both Master Plan and Governor's Task Force update and discussion.

Dr. Henderson called attention to the matrix in the resource package and the discussion paper of the School Readiness Initiative. About a year ago, the State Commission began to move towards School Readiness as the overarching frame for its various activities as it became apparent that children learning and ready for school was the most strategic of all of the results. Over the last few months things have been moving forward nicely. The two most important points with regard to the Commission's effectiveness are (1) working in partnership with the county commissions and developing activities that will have a statewide impact; and (2) to collectively influence public policy. Dr. Henderson explained legislative endeavors that have resulted in the development of a master plan for public education, which initially encompassed the K-12 system, transitioning into the higher education system. After holding public hearings on this master plan for public education, it became clear from comment and testimony that the preschool and school readiness component must be a part of that. The Prop 10 Commission was asked to form another work group that would deal with the school readiness component of the master plan. The Commission voted to do that and to set aside funds for staffing and providing related research. Both the State Commission as well as the master plan workgroup have adopted the National Education Goals panel's definition of school readiness, which defines school readiness from a child's perspective and includes social and emotional development, physical development, approaches to learning, cognitive development, and language development. The Master Plan Workgroup is comprised of 60 members and is developing a plan that will bring together these very systems to result in recommendations to the Legislature, short term and long range about how to actually create what is currently a non-system in California, a comprehensive system that will support all children being ready to succeed to their highest potential in school.

Work is also being done to develop a school readiness initiative in partnership with county commissions in order to begin implementing programs that will be targeted children who attend the lowest performing schools throughout the state. Dr. Henderson elaborated on the details of this initiative.

Ms. Davis noted that there is a gap in relation to early child care education. While there are a number of children in childcare, many are in relative care. She asked where that linkage will occur. Another point was that the programs will be established in the schools targeted by this initiative and Ms. Davis questioned how many schools will be open to the idea of targeting children pre-K.

Dr. Henderson responded that no work will be done with childcare centers exclusively at all. In fact, an excellent use of a school readiness initiative would be to design avenues for outreach, inclusion and improving the quality of care in the informal settings as well as family childcare. With respect to the linkage, the notion right now is that any

centers or programs would not have to be school-based, but the proposal would require there to be a linkage with the schools. She explained how this approach is envisioned. This would also emphasize the inclusion of children with disabilities.

A general discussion followed on power dynamics, matching dollars, informal childcare and network, with special emphasis on informal childcare needing to receive attention. Ms. Marquez introduced Roberta Peck and Judy Stucki who have been working on the School Readiness Initiative and the Master Plan respectively. She suggested that committee members contact them to receive additional information or offer suggestions and other input. It was announced that there is a School Readiness link on the Commission's web site.

Mr. Guzman pointed out that the teenage pregnancy rate in the Latino community in Fresno is among the highest in the state. The consequences of children raising children is that children being raised by teen parents are going to drop out of school at higher rates. They will be below the average grade level and give up as early as Junior High. In addition, there are language and cultural barriers, high unemployment rates, and access difficulties in rural areas. In order to turn around the low test scores in the Central Valley, you have to start at home. School-based programs must be linked to the home and the home must become viewed as a learning institution. He suggested incorporating these thoughts in the document will make a difference.

Dr. Choi related ways to read and enjoy books by all families in multiple languages. This will encourage pride in culture and builds self esteem. Dr. Phipps explained that the Commission is funding these kind of things. In the "Early Steps for Reading and Success Project," one of the components is that the teachers who are taking the training go back to their early literacy programs and deliver a two-hour workshop for parents. The parents then receive books to take home and use with their children in either Spanish or English.

With regard to school readiness paper, Edna Marquez commented that there is a great value in having families care for their children. This is one of the main reasons are that not all children do well in a large center.

Ms. Frausto said she did not see any discussion around families who do not send their kids to public schools, but do home schooling, or utilize private or charter schools.

Responding to an inquiry about timing and funding by Mr. Lopez, Dr. Henderson recommended that the initiative should not be implemented until a year from July. This would enable infrastructure and evaluation to be put in place; base-line data will be collected and a process for developing partnerships will be put in place around January. This would leave plenty of time for planning. In terms of a match, there are many community resources that can be brought into play. The building blocks elements of what would be a school readiness initiative will be provided to the local commissions and it will be then be up the local commissions on how to proceed. Dr. Henderson referenced the Elizabeth Learning Center as an urban model and explained this would not probably work in rural communities.

Returning to the subject of funding not happening for another year, Ms. Blasingame assumed this had to do with giving local commissions the opportunity to revisit their strategic plans and see if they would like to change it. She also assumed that the school readiness centers and program is looking at creating a place in the community where people can go with facilitators going from that place into people's homes. Thus these would be comprehensive family resource centers.

Public Comment

Karen Bentner stated she attended the Governor's Initiative meeting and felt that this school readiness plan is an amazing combination of a number of philosophies. What makes it unique is its holistic approach. She reassured the participants that at no time were the schools dictated. It was made very clear that this is a local initiative and that the selected site would be whatever the community feels is the most appropriate.

Pamm Shaw pointed to the fact that the population in the under-performing schools are mostly kids of color, kids of poverty and these populations tend to also have a larger proportion of children with disabilities and special needs. In looking at statistics, regional center and special education statistics must always be incorporated when looking at populations. This is critical. Prop 10 has a better opportunity than any place else because of the level of involvement of pediatricians both on the State Commission and on the committees.

- **Inclusion Project**

Emily Nahat provided updates on the Inclusion Project. The committee's input on this project has been provided to the county commissions for their feedback and preferences on how to approach this project to increase the ability of families to access and maintain early care and education for their children with disabilities and special needs. Once County Commission feedback has been received, an other update will be given.

- **Disability Consulting Service with Sonoma State University**

Positive outcomes for children with disabilities and other special needs consulting services from Sonoma State University was fully discussed at the February meeting. The State Commission subsequently discussed this item at their last meeting and has asked that it be added as an action item to its April meeting. The proposed project has two components for FY 01-02:

- (1) to do the strategic planning process with a broad stakeholder group to identify those strategic investments for the State Commission to make, and
- (2) to provide consulting support to the Commission and staff as well as to the Advisory group.

- **Evaluation**

Elias Lopez introduced the newest member of the Research and Evaluation Division, Dr. Patricia Skelton, and provided the committee with her qualifications. She will be working on the research evaluation design for the school readiness initiative.

The RFP for the public opinion survey has been released and a contractor will probably be in place sometime in May-June. The draft questionnaires will be brought back to the committee for their review. He asked to make a future presentation of an evaluation framework for the counties as there will be implications from this work as to what Prop 10 is doing statewide. Mr. Lopez underscored the importance of the discussion held this morning on diversity and its implications.

Javier Guzman suggested involvement in the design encompassing isolated communities in Kern County and west side of Fresno, including the labor camps and asked to be informed when the time comes to conduct the surveys at those communities.

Reverend Lilly spoke about County of Los Angeles and suggested that because of the geographic differences to make sure utilizing people who can access all the different diversities there.

Public Comment

Donita Stromgren with the California Childcare Resource and Referral Network had a question related to the survey on the Inclusion project and wondered if that information will be coming back to the Diversity Committee prior to going to the full Commission. Emily Nahat responded that a small reaction group will take a look at the recommendations before going back to the State Commission. The recommendations are expected by the second week in April

A discussion followed on incorporating feedback from the advisory group and individuals into the recommendations.

Statewide Conference Planning Committee

Jennifer Bell expressed her appreciation for the work done by the committee. She provided the committee with her qualifications and experience in the educational field. The 2002 conference is in the preliminary stages of planning with the theme being school readiness with all its various aspects and possibilities. The number of participants will be increased exponentially enabling more people to attend, especially from the individual counties. The location will be San Diego in the month of March. A planning team of ten to fifteen people will meet approximately three times to plan the conference. Rafaela Frausto, Maysee Yang, Javier Guzman, and Irene Martinez will serve on the Planning Committee as representatives of the Advisory Committee. The first meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2001. Ms. Bell asked for input into the conference that will be focused on specific goals, themes and objectives that will result in promoting the work in the best possible light.

Advisory Committee on Diversity Webpage

Anthony Souza, Chief of Technology for the State Commission, explained his duties in connection with the creation and maintenance of the websites for the Commission and 17 county commissions. He alerted the committee members to the fact that there is a State Commission website. Within that website is a dedicated page to the Advisory Committee on Diversity. He encouraged the committee to utilize that page to get information out to the constituency as well as share information with each other. The State Commission website receives about 250 thousand hits a month indicating a lot of traffic moving through that site. This makes it a very powerful tool for all of the state commissions, including this committee to get information out. He urged everyone to utilize the website as much as possible and to contact him for any assistance. He described how to move around the website.

Ms. Michelson noted that the diversity button does not address disabilities or poverty and isolation issues. A discussion followed on how to best make use of the website and to make it very resourceful.

Committee Member Reports and Announcements

Brenda Blasingame indicated that she attended the Policy Makers Institute and participated in the breakout group on school-readiness. The main point emphasized was that there needs to be a move away from putting so much importance on test scores, because teachers are teaching to the test and not teaching to the students. Every child needs to be given an opportunity to succeed in life the way they want to succeed. She further mentioned that Contra Costa County is one of eight counties in the state that is participating in the Civic Engagement project for children and families. A report from that group was passed out.

Patricia Phipps reminded the committee that brochures were handed out related to the pre-K guidelines training program. She also announced the broadcast dates, April 3, 17 and May 1st. She urged the committee members to get the word out to let people know the training is open to communities as well.

Adjournment

Upon motion to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned.